

12/16/68

Dear Ed,

Thus far I've avoided interviewing all the off-beat preachers because there are uncountable at best and reveals usually. Brodsky is an exception. His behavior in New Orleans was, even for that tolerant town, scandalous. If every thing he said were true, who could believe him? He and others like him have caused a tremendous waste of time and energy that could better be spent almost any other way. More, I do not believe Ferris ever told anyone what Brodsky says he told him. These guys almost without exception feed back what they hear Jim wants and is telling about, each seeking a little glory at the same time.

He chased young boys through New Orleans, created a scene at Barbara Kahn's when he wanted to bring down in, got himself arrested in his courtings only to proclaim immunity because he was Garrison's star witness, was finally chased out of town he went back only to announce he had given 14 hours of the most important testimony, was awarded almost overnight in the office an honorary doctorate! Believe him!

Associating with him is in itself bad, as Jeff did. I will not be of help if any use is made at the trial, nor does it tend to make people think he are responsible.

They are all hooked on one kind or another, making a devious living in a very devious way, preying on others. In this story, they are in character.

On threats against Jim: by all means report them to Louis Ives, for who you take a chance. I do not believe he has been in any danger for a long time. Having become his own worst enemy by his excesses, he diminished any hope for killing him. However, these threats do give him some worry, even though short, from what Vince says. I now think at least some were intended only as a war of nerves.

I think it is wise to pay the highest attention to these guys when there is so much lightness about the case. However, I do, immediately, relay your message to Vince and I gave him a word to it.

There has been a major disaster in this endless feeding of bad information. It has perhaps ruined the investigation. One of the worst offenders was Turner. If he supplied a single piece of worthwhile information, I have not found it, even when he forwarded the work of others as his own, and it was not common. The same thing this would have made a major difference. He teamed up with Bailey on such things. At the very best it looks really suspicious. Vince and Gary are convinced he is an agent; I do not, but even it makes much difference when the effect is evaluated?

Jim seemed close to using some of this stuff several times, did get too close to public too often. One of the worst is Ford. It's like every time you know about him, in detail, especially on "The Plot", Harvey Lowmyer, etc. That, I am convinced, is an intelligence operation, not French, and there are some rather nice fits with other things already. I regard this as important. When we can be face to face again I can tell you what I now cannot. But believe me, we were all on the brink of disaster. It is so far out you'll have trouble crediting it.



Save for the fortunate accident of my unexpected return to New Orleans, at this request, when I was in Dallas, it might by now be all over.

There is and has been too much of a tendency out there to take "it's every circumstance as the time given word." It is anything but that, as the most careful analysis should show. People should do their own thinking, not be spectators. I am not addressing you but am making a general observation that I think you will see is too widely applicable, especially among the spectators and the underground press.

In any event, in New Orleans the sole direction must be toward the Shaw trial. I do not know what evidence he may have of which I have no knowledge, but I also know of no means for rejoicing. I think it is possible the case may be lost technically if not factually. They have asked me to return as soon as I can, before the trial, and I will. I will wait until I hear from New. My best estimate at the moment is about mid-January.

If, instead of following the Turners and Barneys (and Palmer) who have been too busy with his own, I had concentrated on his local stuff, where he has jurisdiction and where slight sums would have been sufficient, I could have had several other viable cases ready for court. I know what I've been able to develop down there, and that in a relatively short amount of working time. I think he'd have been able to get the kind of indictments he really wants. As it is, since from the indictment of Shaw, he has nothing on the prosecution itself, nor on any of the accused.

The rest of us, however, must do our own thing. We have the entire field to cover, and that we should, independently, and without feeding everything to him for him to use or abuse as he sees fit. New Orleans material, as all seems, but nothing not related to it. The alternative is to destroy the usefulness of all the solid evidence dug up.

We'll have enough of a disaster if he fails in court, particularly after all his big talk based on nothing, about the kinds of things he can not present to a jury that we will be waiting there.

Get the gun back to work. Wish us, right belt, and a good year!

Sincerely,